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## THE VALUE OF METAPHYSICS.

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By H. HUDSON.

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THE ideas expressed here are dependent upon work of which I have assumed the reader to have some knowledge. Rather than laboriously recapitulate the arguments they have used, I express my debt to writers such as Ogden and Richards, Wittgenstein, Carnap, and Britton. According to the view I express below, my remarks are largely an emotional commentary on their results. I have been mainly concerned to indicate, though not to demonstrate, that poor neglected and reviled metaphysics still has a place, and great value, in human concerns. I cannot see that metaphysics can 'demonstrate' anything in any strictly logical sense of the word, although it may stimulate and bring to notice many interesting and important ideas.

Although metaphysics does not use the same sort of language as physics and chemistry, that is not to say that the sentences of metaphysics do not convey information. What sort of information do these sentences mainly convey? It has been shown that the "symbolic reference" of many metaphysical sentences is extremely vague and confused. Together with this it has been shown that many metaphysical sentences are not scientifically verifiable. Accordingly it has been suggested that any information given by metaphysical sentences is predominantly emotive. Their basic aim is to convey and stimulate emotion and feeling. Thus metaphysics has been likened to poetry. The two differ, however, in that the former attempts to make its expression (i.e., its statement) as clear and systematic as possible.

If metaphysics depends upon a set of more or less complex and subtle emotional reactions on the part of man to his relation to the universe, is it ever necessary to justify the basic assumptions on which a metaphysical system depends? Our reaction, of which these assumptions are the expression, is probably determined by our glands and our liver, together with a host of other circumstances. Under these conditions 'justification' degenerates into mere 'excuse making'. We can neither help our feelings nor avoid expressing them though we may feel under some obligation to make excuses for our act of expressing and for the expressions themselves. The mental attitude or set behind the linguistic expression is merely a natural phenomenon and as such requires neither excuse nor justification. In so far as it is natural to 'express' our mental trends and reactions in a linguistic form, the 'act of expressing' may be regarded in a similar way. In these senses our assumptions require no justification. The principal trouble commences with 'the act of expressing'. Although we cannot attack the mental attitude behind the act we can and do attack the language in which the attitude finds expression. In this case the dispute becomes linguistic. Some thinkers would maintain that it can never become anything else. My metaphysical problems are due to weakness and obscurities inherent in my use of language. If the language could be rectified, both the problems and the need for making such assumptions would disappear. Metaphysical problems are replaced by linguistic problems. This may or may not be so, at least it remains to be proved. Because certain problems can be demonstrated as pseudo-problems due to linguistic confusions, we are hardly justified in asserting that all such problems are pseudo-problems due to the same factors. Some metaphysical problems may be linguistic in origin while others may not. Even if science could demonstrate all fundamental metaphysical problems as 'pseudo-problems' due to linguistic abuses, we could still assume that these 'pseudo-problems' are merely symbols for deeper personal problems. Why always look to language for the source of the trouble? What may be



a pseudo-problem for science may be of real interest to the poet or the artist. For him it may represent a real personal problem. The study of such pseudo-problems would be personally valuable because of its cathartic effects, and the degree of self-understanding and synthesis it could impart. The influence of these so-called pseudo-problems on the social development and spiritual life of centuries has surely been so deep and remarkable that one wonders whether the dismissal of them as pseudo-problems really means that because of its methodology and use of language, science can neither appreciate nor see the problems. Indeed it is perhaps unable through its own methods to even discover them. To be unable to see, discover, or appreciate a problem does not involve that there is no problem. Can we say then that poets, artists, and metaphysicians have problems which the scientist qua scientist cannot appreciate? Surely we can; not only the deliverances of scientists themselves, but the whole linguistic technique and methodology of science support our conclusion. Science can destroy a solution only in so far as the solution is 'scientifically interpreted'. To destroy or discredit the 'scientific interpretation' of a solution, does not necessarily discredit the whole solution unless one is nothing but a scientist. We are under no obligation to go cap in hand to the nearest scientist or logical analyst to ask him whether logical analysis, etc., would support our conclusions or verify our results. The scientist may make a scientific interpretation if he wishes and if he is able. We make our own interpretation with an eye to our own problems and in the light of our own emotional background and needs.

While every man may be regarded as a metaphysician, and is given to making *statements* expressing his solution of these basic problems, only a limited number of people feel under any obligation to make a *systematic statement*. A 'systematic statement' here means that the basic assumptions are seen and recognised as such, they are formulated as explicitly and clearly as possible and their consequences also developed as completely as possible.

Roughly we may here distinguish two different linguistic levels. We have the crude more or less ill-formulated utterances of the ordinary man. We next have the systematic discussion and statement of these. What we may call 'philosophical metaphysics' comes to be a language in which we talk about and analyse ordinary metaphysics. It is well known that we can construct languages in which to talk *about* other languages. Nor is there any condition that such metalanguages be scientific. This point need not occasion any difficulty. Difficulties do arise, however, when we wish to know more about this metalanguage which we call 'philosophical metaphysics'. As has been indicated, one of its most important features is its attempt to be 'systematic'. It appears that it is mainly on this basis that 'philosophical metaphysics' has claimed to be a science. Modern logical analysis appears to have shown quite conclusively that this, while a necessary criterion of scientific respectability, is by no means a sufficient one. In other words, it is quite possible for a language to be 'systematically developed' but not be a scientific language.

The main distinction between 'philosophical metaphysics' and 'science' seems to turn principally on a difference in the use of language. The language of a scientific system is constructed in such a way as to ruthlessly exclude emotive elements, to provide accuracy and precision of reference, compactness and economy of terminology and rules, and maintain rigour and accuracy of inference. A 'non-scientific system' while it may strive for rigour and accuracy of inference does not use language in such a way as to permit this rigour and accuracy. Emotive elements are not excluded; symbolic reference is often vague and confused; the terminology and rules are neither compact nor clear; use is frequently made of quite unverifiable sentences either for assumptions or as steps in deductions which end in conclusions apparently verifiable. Metaphysical philosophy is characterised by all these points. Many important apparently verifiable sentences are seen upon examination to be unverifiable in any scientific sense. Nevertheless it is admitted that



there is a factual content, however attenuated, in many metaphysical sentences, and that they may be verifiable, though not in any strictly scientific sense. Their factual content is emotive rather than symbolic. What are the final criteria that distinguish metaphysical from scientific sentences?—for not all metaphysical sentences are scientifically unverifiable. This is a problem that does not yet appear to have been satisfactorily solved. Verifiability is an important criterion but not quite a sufficient one. Some sentences belonging to a metaphysical language and playing an important part may be quite verifiable by scientific means. Yet we can hardly say that metaphysics is not entitled to use them because of this. And if it is entitled to use them and they play an important rôle in a metaphysical system they can be described as metaphysical sentences. The matter seems to depend on the factor of 'interest'. From the scientific standpoint such sentences are scientific, but the metaphysician finds them interesting and suggestive and gives them a place in his philosophical system. In this setting they naturally assume a significance and meaning different from what they would have in a scientific system. This is particularly noticeable when words such as 'infinity', 'change', 'order', 'symmetry', which can be given quite a definite and precise symbolic reference in a scientific system, are taken over by metaphysics. The words tend to assume a definite emotive tinge and lose to some extent their precision and exactness. Regarding 'verification' we may say that when a metaphysical sentence conveys information either of an emotive or symbolic kind, or stimulates emotion, in other words when it can be 'understood' or 'seen to have meaning', that sentence is verified. This is using 'verification' in rather a wide sense, but if metaphysical sentences attempt to convey and stimulate emotion, surely their success constitutes their verification.

Many of the modern difficulties of metaphysical philosophy seem to be due to its claims to a scientific title. The claim is ancient in origin and of long standing, but appears to have succeeded in irritating modern scientists. Such a claim lays

metaphysics right open to a sharp offensive operated by scientist and positivist, and conducted with all the weapons of logical analysis and scientific methodology. I intend neither to examine the attack nor to study its development here. I merely wish to state that while these critics may have rendered the scientific aspirations of metaphysical philosophy hopeless, they have by no means destroyed metaphysics. There was a period in which, carried away by the heat of conflict and flush of victory, certain eminent thinkers did seem to have thought that the worth of metaphysics had been destroyed. The problems of metaphysics were dismissed as largely pseudo-problems, the sentences of metaphysics were derided as senseless. Now when there has been more time to view the situation in perspective, it is seen that the victory while interesting is not a major one. The sentences of metaphysics while they may be scientifically senseless, yet have an important meaning which falls outside the scope of scientific treatment. The dispute has had the effect of showing the poverty of meaning of scientific sentences, and the conventional nature of much scientific method and law. If the scientist has succeeded in laying one phantom low, he has at least succeeded in raising several others to haunt him.

Metaphysical and scientific sentences may be regarded as compatible but not comparable. A genuinely metaphysical scheme is not likely to conflict with a scientific outline. Of course a metaphysical system may issue statements about matters that really concern science, e.g., Hegel and the planets. In such cases metaphysics tends to reveal by the absurdity of its conclusions, its complete inability to deal with the subject matter of science in the way science demands. If philosophers can learn from the past, and there is, *a priori*, no reason why they should find it more difficult than any other animal, they will not presume to interfere in matters that are the concern and interest of science. Perhaps metaphysical philosophy is unable to avoid making statements that are *capable* of arousing scientific interest and are capable of ultimate scientific verification. No doubt she will be crucified many times on



the cross of scientific ridicule and blamed by scientists and logical analysts, for having the presumption to bring to scientific notice matters which these scientists had either overlooked or ignored. Historical fact shows that metaphysical philosophy has played the part of 'mother of science'. The idea that philosophy as a whole should become 'the analysis of science' seems quite foreign to that creative artistic spirit so vital to metaphysical philosophy.

The sentences of science and metaphysics are not comparable, because of their different use of language, and the different interests of the two studies. This has, I think, been sufficiently indicated above.

The aim of science is hardly amenable to scientific treatment or formulation. This may be regarded as a philosophical question. I do not mean just one science, but every science—science generally conceived. What does science seek to do? What is the use of studying or pursuing science? One may ask precisely the same questions regarding 'metaphysics'. There are as many answers returned to such questions as there are brands of philosophy. Agreement seems impossible between philosophers. It has been suggested that it is the emotive implications of metaphysical sentences that are basically important. If this is correct it could explain why philosophers cannot agree and why they cannot satisfactorily understand one another. They cannot understand one another because the emotional backgrounds can never be identical. To this extent no two philosophers even in agreement will have complete mutual understanding. If there are certain similar elements in the emotional background it may be suggested that a certain measure of understanding is possible. The greater the similarity of background, the wider the field of possible understanding. We need not say that a high degree of capacity to understand involves agreement, or inability to understand involves disagreement, though agreement or disagreement are much more probable as the case may be.

The feeling of strangeness, helplessness, and loneliness, in an apparently alien world, must be one of the most rudimen-

tary and strongest of all feelings. This we may suggest is the primitive emotional basis of metaphysics. Various explanations and attempts are made by man to render the universe more congenial to his ego. Religions, philosophies, all attempting to accomplish the task, flourish. As far as we have any record they have always flourished. This testifies in one way to the strength of the urge behind philosophy. Again, the perpetual expressions of opinion by all men on man's place, station, destiny, and what not, in the universe, afford yet further testimony.

Metaphysics begins to appear as an expression and working out of our emotional reaction. In so far as the emotions behind this reaction are particularly strong and very inclusive (i.e., tend to draw off other emotions into the same pattern as themselves), it tends to be a linguistic expression of our personality. Viewed socially, it becomes an emotional critique or calculus, striving to indicate, outline, and refine concepts which have the greatest and highest emotional value. It would be a bold man who would say that such work is valueless or meaningless either for the person concerned or for society. It appears that our modern civilisation is suffering a lack of such refinement and is at present paying the price. On such a view metaphysical philosophy becomes art, and great philosophy great art. The great philosophers appear as master painters, painting a picture of the world in terms of the tones and subtleties of their own personalities. Such men have moulded the spiritual life of centuries. Thus the old Greek ideal of "wisdom" as the aim of philosophy comes nearer once again. It is not knowledge of the world, it is not knowledge of the answers to the problems of science, but the understanding of the self based on that artistic knowledge that only philosophy can give, that can make men wise.

In attempting to defend metaphysics, I have been performing a somewhat unnecessary task. Many of those who rigorously attacked metaphysics are content to leave her alone. Yet, though they seem to admit her right to exist, they still appear to regard her as a rather worthless pursuit. This,



together with the fact that many people seem to be slaves to words, has occasioned this rather unsystematic attempt to indicate that metaphysics can have considerable value. Regarding 'word-slavery', one may be held in bondage by words in two ways: (a) One may be using them in such a way as to cause obscurity and confusion of thought. If the use is corrected these problems then disappear. (b) One may look always to the 'symbols' as the most important factor in any situation where intellectual confusions and problems arise.

No one will dispute that language and thought are equally fundamental, each is inconceivable without the other. They have developed together and stimulated each other. But the fact that symbols are necessary to thought and therefore to philosophy cannot justify the view that thought and philosophy are arts of using symbols. Nor can the view that the problems which give rise to philosophy originate in symbolic usage find support here. Why must certain philosophers look always to the symbol instead of the thing symbolised? The answer seems to be that they are under the spell of 'words'.

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## A NOTE ON KANT'S CRITICISM OF THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

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By T. A. JOHNSTON, S.J.

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THE article *Can Religion Be Discussed* in the September, 1942, issue of the *Journal* is pleasant, interesting, stimulating. A Catholic may perhaps be excused for regretting that "Catholic" was given no opportunity of showing that his statement "God is His own Goodness" was by no means so non-sensical as "Logician" would make it out to be. There is much that might have been said.

But that is not the point that interests me for the moment. On p. 144, *à propos* of the phrase put in the mouth of "Catholic" that "God is His own Being", the author has the following footnote:

This proposition is not only in Anselm but in Aquinas, who holds that God's existence though necessary, is not self-evident to man. I have not equated Catholic's position with the acceptance of the ontological argument; though I think Kant has shown that he *ought* to accept the ontological argument—that the cosmological argument depends on it."

One is grateful to the author at least for the disarming modesty of his claim "I think Kant has shown". It compares very favourably with the confident assertion so often heard that Kant knocked the bottom once for all out of the *quinque viae* of Aquinas, and the reiterated phrase about "Kant's devastating criticism of the traditional arguments for God's existence". But it is high time something was said about it, and people who indulge in this kind of talk would do well to give the matter more careful consideration. The sorry fallacy of the Kantian view has, of course, been shown up before, but



not perhaps in places where the exposure was likely to meet the gaze of those who imagine that the genius of Kant demolished the rational proofs of God's existence.

The outline of Kant's position with regard to the traditional arguments may be given in his own words: "Thus the physico-theological is based upon the cosmological, and this upon the ontological proof of the existence of a Supreme Being; and as besides these three there is no other path open to speculative reason, the ontological proof, on the ground of pure conceptions of reason, is the only possible one, if any proof of a proposition so far transcending the empirical exercise of the understanding is possible at all" (Meiklejohn's translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 387).

As Kant has already demolished the ontological argument to his own entire satisfaction, he is thus convinced that there is no speculative proof of any value for the existence of God. Many have taken it, apparently, without further investigation, that he has said the last word on the subject. There is, however, much more to be said. Kant's criticism will not, in its turn, stand examination.

I think the position can best be made clear by the statement of two propositions which I will afterwards proceed to establish. The two propositions are: (1) Kant does not seem to have understood the ontological argument; (2) his reduction of the cosmological argument to the ontological argument is a piece of sheer though, of course, unconscious sophistry.

The first of these two propositions is of minor importance, but the point is worth making. But I must make it clear at the outset that this is no attempt at a defence of the ontological argument. The argument was attacked while St. Anselm himself was alive, was rejected by Aquinas, and is accepted, so far as I know, by no modern scholastic philosopher. But it has a subtlety which seems to have escaped Kant, so much so that his criticism of it gives us no more than a caricature of the argument.

The ontological argument, as propounded by St. Anselm, runs thus: God is a being than whom nothing greater can be conceived; but a being than whom nothing greater can be conceived necessarily exists (for, should it not exist, then something greater could be conceived—the same being *existing*); therefore God necessarily exists. Kant rejects this argument in the *Transcendental Dialectic*, Bk. II, Ch. III, Sect. IV: *Of the Impossibility of an Ontological Proof of the Existence of God*. The passage is wordy and not very clear. But his criticism seems to be on two grounds.

The ontological argument is based on the principle that to deny the existence of a being than whom nothing greater can be conceived would be a contradiction in terms. But, says Kant, to deny the existence of a thing is to annihilate in thought the thing itself and all its predicates. "How then can there be any room for contradiction?" This reply to the ontological argument is invalid if the possibility of an infinitely perfect or self-existing nature be admitted. In this case, and in this case alone, possibility and actuality are inseparable, are *unthinkable* apart from each other. It is precisely in taking for granted the *possibility* of such a nature that St. Anselm's argument fails. We do not know *a priori* that such a nature is possible. Now Kant does not seem to have questioned the possibility. Scotus and Leibniz both exposed the weakness of the ontological argument, though Leibniz apparently thought it should be provisionally accepted. In the Leibnizian form of the argument: 'If God is possible, He exists; but God is possible; therefore He exists'; the major premiss is irrefragable. But only when we have established *a posteriori* the existence of God can we be sure of the minor.

Kant's second attack on the ontological argument had perhaps better be quoted in his own words:

It is absurd to introduce—under whatever term disguised—into the conception of a thing, which is to be cogitated solely in reference to its possibility, the conception of its existence. If this is admitted, you will have apparently gained the day, but in reality you have announced nothing but a mere tautology. I ask, is the proposition *this or that thing* (which I am admitting to be possible) *exists*, an



analytical or synthetical proposition? If the former, there is no addition made to the subject of your thought by the affirmation of its existence; but then the conception in your mind is identical with the thing itself, or you have supposed the existence of a thing to be possible, and then inferred its existence from its internal possibility—which is but a miserable tautology. The word *reality* in the conception of a thing, and the word existence in the conception of the predicate, will not help you out of the difficulty. For, supposing you were to term all positing of a thing, reality, you have thereby posited the thing with all its predicates in the conception of the subject and assumed its actual existence, and this you merely repeat in the predicate. But if you confess, as every reasonable person must, that every existential proposition is synthetical, how can it be maintained that the predicate of existence cannot be denied without contradiction?—a property which is the characteristic of analytical propositions alone” (op. cit., p. 367).

The point of all this, if one understands it aright, is that the existence of a thing is altogether extrinsic to the concept of it, and that therefore we cannot argue from concept to existence. This contention is a perfectly sound one if restricted to finite things (such as Kant’s hundred dollars, or even the perfect island imagined by Gaunilo, St. Anselm’s contemporary), but breaks down in the case of the infinitely perfect nature which is here in question. In this case the nature contains the note of existence, existence is an essential part of the concept. Therefore, as St. Anselm rightly saw, if we think of it at all, we must think of it as existing. In other words, if the concept that we have of an infinitely perfect being is a real objective possibility and not a contradiction in terms, such a being must exist. But the question is: have we such a concept? We may prove *a posteriori* that we have, but we do not know that for certain *a priori*.

Kant, therefore, failed to understand the ontological argument. It is invalid; but not for the reasons assigned by him.

My second proposition, namely, that Kant’s reduction of the cosmological to the ontological argument is sophistical, is of far greater importance.

Kant outlines the cosmological proof in the following words: “If we admit the existence of some one thing, whatever it may be, we must also admit that there is something which exists *necessarily*. For what is contingent exists only

under the condition of some other thing which is its cause; and from this we must go on to conclude the existence of a cause, which is not contingent, and which consequently exists necessarily and unconditionally. Such is the argument by which reason justifies its advance towards a primal being" (op. cit., p. 360).

This is an excellent summary of the argument, and any man of sense might well be content with it. However, if one puts one's trust in *a priori* forms to the extent of distrusting the objective value of one's own thinking, the argument is obviously not worth much. But that is not the point here. What we are concerned with is the logical rigour of Kant's reduction of the argument to the ontological argument.

To understand this, the cosmological argument must be pursued a little further. The establishment of the existence of a necessary being is the first and most important step. The second step deduces the infinite perfection of this necessary being from its being absolutely unconditioned. So the completed argument runs thus: If something exists, a necessary being exists; but something exists; therefore a necessary being exists. But necessary being must be infinitely perfect; therefore an infinitely perfect being (whom we call God) exists.

It is on the proposition 'Necessary being is infinitely perfect' that Kant fastens as the spot where the ontological argument has insinuated its sophistical presence. This he proceeds to show, by the application of a little formal logic, thus:

The proposition 'Necessary being is infinitely perfect being' is an A proposition, and so can be converted into 'Some infinitely perfect being is necessary being' (*conversio per accidens*). But since there could obviously be only one infinitely perfect being, the proposition is capable of simple conversion (*conversio simplex*) and we may say 'Every infinitely perfect being is a necessary being, i.e., necessarily exists'. And this, exclaims Kant triumphantly, is the very ontological argument the fallacy of which he has already exposed!



It is indeed a dramatic *dénouement*. But in reality this reduction of the cosmological argument to the ontological, far from exposing a latent fallacy, is itself fallacious.

Where then is the fallacy of Kant's contention? It is very simple. When he goes through the process of converting the proposition 'Necessary being is infinitely perfect being', he takes it for granted that it is *by this proposition* that the *existence* of necessary being is established, entirely neglecting the fact that the existence of necessary being has already been established by the previous step in the argument. When we say 'Necessary being is infinitely perfect', we are speaking of a being *already known to exist*.

This may seem so simple as to be almost childish. It is, in fact, as simple as that.

There is a good deal more that might be said about Kant's criticism of the traditional arguments for the existence of God. For the moment let it suffice to have brought out this point. But I cannot conclude without making a plea for an unprejudiced examination of the case for a Natural Theology. Far too often the subject is simply neglected; and those who reject the arguments for the existence of God rely far too much on the *ipse dixit* of a Hume or a Kant without bending their own minds to the task of impartial enquiry. Metaphysics is a severe discipline. Too many fight shy of it.

"No one now is convinced by the traditional arguments for God's existence." So writes Professor Alexander in *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. II, p. 343. It was an extraordinary statement for a philosopher with any reputation to lose. The cold fact is that literally tens upon tens of thousands of trained minds of men alive in the world to-day have examined those arguments at every point and found them eminently satisfactory. Unfortunately for the value of Professor Alexander's assertion, he gave testimony against himself a few years after the publication of *Space, Time and Deity*. A scholastic philosopher in the United States, Dr. J. S. Zybura, circularised a large number of non-scholastic philosophers, enquiring about their views on scholastic philosophy, the reasons why so many

pay no attention to it, and the prospects of a *rapprochement* between the scholastic system and other modern concepts of thought. The results of his questionnaire, with other very interesting matter of a kindred nature, were published in a book entitled *Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism*. Professor Alexander was among the many who replied to the questions put to them. We read his reply on page 79. It contains these words:

To my profound regret, I have only a superficial and second-hand knowledge both of Scholastic and Neo-Scholastic philosophy. Whenever I do come into direct contact with them I feel the real loss which such ignorance entails.

Comment is superfluous. It would seem that Professor Alexander had read his Kant but not his Aquinas. I suspect that there must be many others in like case.

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## DISCUSSIONS.

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### I. THE MEANING OF GOOD.

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By A. D. HOPE.

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PROFESSOR JOHN ANDERSON'S article on G. E. Moore's *Ethics* (Journal, September, 1942) is an important advance in the theory of the subject. Moore's *Principia Ethica* was an important book because it cleared up the confusion inherent in most earlier theories of Ethics by pointing out that goodness is either a quality *sui generis* or we must give up talking about it, that those who define good as pleasure or the will of God or anything else are in fact not entitled to call their subject Ethics at all, for they have admitted that the apparent object of their science has turned out to be something else.

In the same way Anderson's analysis of Moore's own theory has cleared up most of the sources of confusion in what he calls "relativist" theories of ethics, i.e. those theories which while they recognise that Ethics as a science depends on the existence of goods to study, treat good partly as a relation and partly as a quality.

There is one source of confusion in ethical theory and one which concerns Moore's theory which Anderson has only briefly touched on and which should, it seems to me, be considered more fully. The whole of Moore's theory is made possible by the fact that he apparently has an immediate and vivid apprehension of goodness as a quality. Anderson has pointed out that the theory built on this datum is incoherent but it still remains to explain how such intuitional notions of good come to be held and accepted. For it is a fact that they are very widely held by philosophies and religions and are implicit in much of our everyday attitudes and conduct. Moore's position and that of people who hold similar views cannot be fully

answered unless one can not only show the logical contradictions involved in their theories but explain the way in which the mistake arises. Moore appears to argue like this: "I do have a strong sense of the obviousness of good as an indefinable and unique quality like 'yellow'. Yellow is a natural object and I can learn about yellow and other natural qualities and objects by observation. Observation is something I can also give an account of. But I do not observe myself observing 'good' and learning about it in the same way as I learn about the properties of natural objects. Only I do attach the quality 'good' to certain natural objects when I observe them. I must therefore get to know about good in some different way from the way I get to know about things in the natural world. I call this way of knowing 'intuition' and I conclude that 'good' is not a natural object or quality and that intuition is a unique, non-natural way of acquiring knowledge of non-natural objects." He also appears not to doubt that his mode of apprehension of 'good' is shared by everyone though people may, and often do, attach it to different objects. The problem of Ethics, then, becomes largely one of explaining how, given a direct and intuitive knowledge of 'good' which is everywhere the same, so many and such contradictory theories of 'goods' can arise. And this he explains by the operation of the 'naturalistic fallacy'. Moore might repudiate this outline of his theory but this seems to me to be the way he is really arguing in *Principia Ethica*, whatever he may claim to be doing.

It is clear that the whole of this theory depends on the 'intuition' of goodness and that no answer to Moore is complete which simply points out the logical contradictions involved in predicating non-natural qualities of natural objects and the incoherence of a theory of unique ways of knowing. For Moore does not claim that his knowledge of 'intuition' is itself intuitive. We get to know about intuition by the natural process of observation and it is to the readers' observation that he appeals for confirmation of the difference between our way of knowing 'good' and knowing yellow (§12). If 'intuition' is observable we do not dispose of it by showing that it is logically absurd,

we must show that the supposed observation is based on a mistake and show how the mistake arises.

To do so we must examine Moore's theory of mind. To do this thoroughly would involve an exhaustive analysis of the *Principia Ethica*, since Moore nowhere explicitly explains the curiously naïve theory of mind which is implicit in his theory. It is enough here to point out that mind for Moore is an extremely simple thing which acts as a single conscious unit or organic whole and in which conflicting motives when they occur conflict in consciousness. Thus in his final chapter on the Ideal it is the value of the *consciousness* of beauty or of good which forms the fundamental truth of Moral Philosophy (§113). But any appeal to this consciousness as in the consideration of cruelty and lust (§125) is to simple introspection. We are asked to imagine "the state of a man whose mind is solely occupied by either of these passions in their worst form" and "a universe which consisted *solely* of minds thus occupied, without the smallest hope that there would ever exist in it the smallest consciousness of any object other than those proper to these passions" (§125). It is obviously assumed that introspection of conscious states of mind is an effective way of getting to know mind and the way its motives operate. The most Moore will concede is that "with regard to the pleasures of lust, the nature of the cognition, by the presence of which they are to be defined, is somewhat difficult to analyse" (§125). There is no suspicion that introspection might have interests to promote and exhibit bias. It is plain that Moore's naïve view of mind does not allow him to give any coherent account of motives or conduct and he shares this disability with all those theorists who take a simple, unitary view of mind. And this complete failure to consider the unconscious and disguised operation of motives and the character of fundamental conflicts of motives that often underlie our judgments not only unfits him to discuss conduct, but is the basis of his theory of intuition and explains why he does not think it worth while to examine the notion that 'intuition' may be an illusion. He has introspective evidence for it and that appears to be final for him.



It is here that various psychological theories of mind which had only begun to affect philosophy seriously about the time Moore's book was written, are important: particularly those of the psycho-analytic school. Whatever one may think of the details, machinery and terminology of Freud's theory of mind, there seems to be no reason to contest the belief that *some* such view of mind is the correct one and a return to rudimentary theories which try to account for mind in terms of consciousness alone is as absurd as a return to Ptolemaic astronomy. Certainly no one should now pretend to be able to give an account of mental processes based on simple introspection. The influence of unconscious forces in our conscious behaviour can no longer be ignored. And it is particularly in moral matters that we tend to conceal from ourselves not only our motives but the very nature of our feelings and actions. Moore's theory is obviously unable to cope with any notion like that of the ambivalence of emotions.

Thus if we were to look at Moore's evidence for 'intuition' in the light of Freud's theory of the divisions of mental life, the Unconscious, the Preconscious and the Conscious and more particularly in the light of his theory of the organisation of mental life round the Id, the Ego and the Super-ego, we would be inclined to say that the evidence is not sufficient. Freud's description of the functioning of a group of forces in the mind which he calls the Super-ego includes the following:

"It is to a great extent unconscious, it is independent of the conscious Ego and is largely inaccessible to it." "Its chief function is criticism which creates in the Ego an unconscious sense of guilt. It acts in the form of a 'categorical imperative' and assumes a compulsive character. It is essentially the same as conscience." "It is a permanent expression of the influence of the parents. The injunctions and prohibitions of the other authorities (teachers *et al.*) remain vested in the Super-ego and continue in the form of conscience to exercise the censorship of morals."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Healy, Bronner and Bowers: "The Structure and Meaning of Psycho-Analysis", Alfred Knopf, New York, 1931, p. 44.

Looked at from this point of view Moore's intuition of goodness would appear to be no more than the Ego's awareness of the influence of the forces of the Super-ego on his conduct. As the Super-ego remains largely outside consciousness it is not surprising that Moore can give no account of how he comes to recognise goodness in terms of the conscious mind, and his postulation of another way of knowing is a very natural hypothesis. It is a hypothesis which of course is probably suggested by other philosophers and fitted to this particular case. The other instance of intuitive knowledge which he adduces, viz. the knowledge of numbers (§66), is apparently borrowed from Plato and must be explained in another way as simply bad observation on Moore's part. For there is no reason to think that we do not arrive at our concept of number by the ordinary way of observation and experience. If the Ideal in Moore's terminology is simply a rationalisation of the unconscious forces in his Super-ego, this will explain his inability to give a coherent account of evils and why he should particularly select lust and cruelty as the worst evils and make the contemplation and enjoyment of these an added evil.

But intuition in this case would cease to have any metaphysical sanction or importance and there would be no ground for denying that 'good' is a natural object of thought, susceptible to observation and description like other natural objects, and the elaborate structure of Moore's Ethics would fall to pieces.

This would not of course affect his claim to have an immediate and unique apprehension of a quality of goodness. It would mean that the part of the mind we have labelled the Super-ego was what observed goodness or that certain attitudes of the Super-ego were the cause of the conscious mind's observing good as a quality of things. But on the other hand it might be maintained that this quality of good was in fact only a rationalisation by the Ego of its attitude to conflicting demands in the Unconscious mind: what Freud calls 'projection'. And it is a fact that the conviction of goodness and badness is a common feature of neurotic compulsions and obsessions, and that when these are removed by analysis the act or object or situation which seemed before obviously qualified as good or bad seems

to become quite neutral and to lose this quality though the only operative change has affected the patient and not the object.

At any rate the question of whether good is a quality or a relation is an open one and perhaps the most valuable thing about Anderson's article was the way in which he defined the two alternatives and the conditions on which we may choose either. It was perhaps a pity that after admitting that the theory that 'good' is a relation was a possible one and capable of consistent development, he did not explain his reason for rejecting this view and choosing the alternative which regards good as a quality and recognises goods as "things existing in certain places and going on in certain ways" (p. 132). The crux of the matter is of course the question of what means we have to "distinguish a quality, recognise a sort of thing" (p. 135) and here his argument is not clear. It is not of course meant to be a thorough exposition of the case for positive Ethics, but the discussion of the way we come to use the names of qualities and relations, to build up our references and to correct our confusions and mistakes, significantly omits any reference to the type of verbal confusion which a relational view of 'good' would maintain to be at the bottom of the qualitative view. This is the view that 'good' is a 'verbal fiction' in the sense in which Bentham used the term to describe the reference of words like 'right' and 'obligation', 'motion' and 'rest' but belonging to the special class of what he calls inferential fictitious entities.<sup>2</sup> It is probable that good would have to be treated also as what Bentham calls a fictitious entity of second remove, that is, an entity such that to obtain a conception of it we have to take into account a fictitious entity of first remove, that is, an entity which can be conceived by considering the relation it bears to a real entity. Thus in Anderson's example of how we learn to attach the word good to a referent we find that the child according to Freudian theory first learns to give bad to withdrawal of parental affection and good to its retention and restoration. Bentham could maintain that this is a description of the way a verbal fiction of second remove is built up. For 'love' itself is

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<sup>2</sup> C. K. Ogden: "Bentham's Theory of Fictions", pp. 7-12.



like 'motion' a fictitious entity, not a thing but a way things behave (in one sense of the word) and a complex relation between things (in the other). Good then first appears as a fictitious quality of this fictitious entity and this accounts in part for the extraordinary difficulty we have in clearing up the confusion. The same criticism could be made of the notion that "good is not merely something that we discover but is that by which we discover things—or, if inquiry be taken as one particular good, it at least communicates with other goods and they assist in its operations" (p. 138). And this as Anderson's earlier article on "Determinism and Ethics" (Journal, December, 1928) shows is an important point in his own theory of Ethics even though it is not fully worked out in the article under discussion. In the first case 'inquiry' is what I would call a fictitious entity of the first remove. It cannot be said to act, i.e. to communicate with anything, except as a short cut way of saying something else, for it is not inquiry that communicates but an inquirer, and the word inquiry has as its referent either what is communicated or the way someone communicates. 'Good' is thus an activity of a person or a relation in which he stands to another person or else it is a quality of an act or a relation. In the same way a little further on good is described as a quality of a way of life (p. 138) and finally (p. 139) it is defined as "those mental activities or those social activities which are free or enterprising". Now there seems to me little difference between defining goods as "attitudes" or "demands" or ways of feeling and needing (the relational view) and defining them as ways of life or mental activities or qualities of mental activities. To say that an attitude or demand has a quality or character is really only a shorthand way of saying that some person or thing behaves in a certain way. The love of X for Y has the same referent as X loves Y and I can see no difference between such propositions as X knows Y and X loves Y. But X knows Y, Anderson admits, expresses a way in which X is related to Y, so that love may also be regarded as a relation of X to Y. In the same way an "enterprising mental activity" is an elliptical way of referring to the fact that somebody feels or thinks enterprisingly about something and putting it in this way we see that in calling this

a good we are not referring to a thing or qualifying an agent but describing a relation between things. For the statement does not tell us anything about the somebody or something. To deny this would involve our holding some theory of internal or constitutive relations.

Thus it would appear that the attempt to treat goods as qualities of things ends in their description as kinds of mental or social activities towards things or as ways in which things are related to other things. The main difference between this view of Ethics and a thoroughgoing relational view would then be that qualitative Ethics adopts a convenient but common type of verbal fiction by which "good" is used as if it were a quality of another fictitious entity.

There is, however, one difference between the sort of relational view outlined by Anderson and the one that I would adopt. He appears to think that a relational view of good would have to equate 'good' with 'what is demanded' and that in consequence all demanding would constitute 'goods'. This 'consumer's' view of Ethics is the sort of simplification which makes the theory that when we say 'good' we mean 'being pleased' so unsatisfactory. Demands, attitudes, feelings, all types of emotional reactions would be involved, and any of them might be what we refer to when we characterise something as good. That some of these attitudes might be of the most complex sort and that their analysis might be extremely difficult to account for and impossible to describe in precise terms the Psycho-Analytic school has shown. Thus there is no simple quality of "demandedness" to replace a simple quality of good, but a large number of attitudes to things some of which might be in direct conflict with others, but which constitute a relation *sui generis* not to be confused with other relations any more than the quality 'good' with other qualities.

Secondly in the sorting out of emotional relations of this sort into the various types we should distinguish those which are characterised by approval and disapproval as the proper study of Ethics. And as these attitudes seem to be partly the result of social pressure, partly the result of funda-

mental conflicts within the individual, Ethics would not itself be concerned with the goodness of goods but simply with the way in which individuals are related to the things of which they approve and disapprove.

It is curious to see how this theory that Ethics is concerned with the goodness of goods recurs in any qualitative view of the subject. It is naïvely obvious in Moore's theory. But it is surprising to find Anderson ultimately adopting the same attitude when his avowed attitude is that goods are things of a certain quality and that Ethics is a descriptive science like Chemistry or Botany, and when he complains of people who cannot see that to describe a thing as good is not a recommendation or exhortation but a description. Following his description of how we come to associate the word 'good' with any quality we are bound to ask : Why this quality rather than that ? Why with love and not with hate of the parents ?—and the answer seems to be that the individual characterises as good those things that first promote his fundamental biological urges and needs : something that is *good for him*. And following his development Anderson sees that it will be good for him to engage in unrepressive and inquiring social and mental activities. 'Good' thus becomes a word like 'healthy' and characterises a kind of mental and social health. By study of the body and its environment we can describe the conditions which will promote a healthy body pretty exactly and define healthy activities. But the question has still to be settled whether there are such conditions in mental and social life. The body does not in general need to maintain the health of one organ at the expense of the others though it does at the expense of individual cells. If we regard societies as made up of individual cells organised in extremely complex functional groups or organs and all with conflicting and possibly incompatible demands, and the individual as being mentally a commonwealth of a similar sort, we see that the analogy of 'good' and 'healthy' tends to disappear. The movement in any direction means taking sides in weighing the goodness of goods, and this is in effect what Anderson has done when he decided in favour of a



certain kind of mental and social life. It may be that it is impossible not to make such decisions. But I would suggest that a thoroughgoing relational view makes it easier to keep one's attitudes and their objects distinct, and to avoid the attitude which regards the greatest happiness of the greatest number as a patently coherent notion. On this point it seems to me that Anderson and Mill are each promoting a tribal theory of ethics. The difference is that they belong to different tribes of philosophers.

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## II.

### THE NATURE OF ETHICS.

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By JOHN ANDERSON.

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IN my article, "The Meaning of Good", I maintained (as I have done in other articles) that, if there is to be a science of ethics, it must be a positive science. I hold, in fact, that there is no such thing as a "normative" science, and I endeavoured, in examining the particular views of Moore, to advance considerations that would support that general position. It seems to me that the prevalence of the "normative" view is one main reason why ethics as a science has not progressed. And, while it would be foolish to expect that that view will ever disappear, progress may still be made through the setting of diverse views in clear opposition to one another—a process which involves the specifying of the crucial issues. It may even be argued that the "normative" outlook affects all science, not merely as an external obstacle, but as something inherent in the scientist's own thinking—so that his progress as a scientist will involve his detection of his own "norms", the conceptions which he imposes on the facts. Atomism, in my view, is a case in point; the belief in ultimate units has been a hindrance to the progress alike of physical and of social science, and the bringing of this way of thinking into the light of day, the treatment of it as a matter of controversy, assists in the growth of a body of positive

knowledge. There may be reasons why the human sciences will always lag, but the clarification of issues and the opening up of lines of inquiry, through a "criticism of categories", takes place in them as well as in other fields. It is still important to observe that there will never be general agreement in any field, that on the subject-matter of every science there is a greater amount of confused than of clear thinking—and that no one is exempt from confusion.

Now the special importance of Moore's work is that he brings these questions into sharp relief in the field of ethics. He has come nearer than any of his predecessors to a positive theory, not simply by his insistence on the objectivity of goodness but by his setting forth of propositions in which it is attributed to various "natural" things, i.e., by his recognition of *species* of goods. The Socratic doctrine of "the unity of virtue" is dictated by the conception of goodness as mandatory (though Socrates also, as I suggested, has some sense of its *qualitative* character), and the adoption of a "pluralist" view is a considerable step towards emancipation from moralism and the establishment of a thoroughly naturalistic ethics. And here, too, Moore's criticism of "metaphysical ethics" is important, and Socrates is again typical of the adherents of the mandatory in treating the nature of goodness as bound up with the nature of reality. But precisely because Moore is only half-emancipated, because he still treats good as calling for support, as requiring of us that we should act in certain ways, he becomes involved in logical difficulties; and, in attempting to straighten out these entanglements, we are forced to recognise the opposing strains in his thinking and are sharply confronted with fundamental ethical problems. That disentanglement will ensue only on the adoption of a completely naturalistic position is not a conclusion to which everyone so confronted will come, but, if even a few do so, the study of Moore's ethical position will have contributed to such progress as is possible in ethical studies in general.

To make this sort of point I had to insist on the logical difficulties, and in doing so I paid less attention than I should

have done under other circumstances to the nature of Moore's contribution to positive ethical theory—and even to the force of his criticism of certain relativistic views. Detailed discussion of these matters would be necessary in any thorough exposition of *Moore's* theory. But, even within the limits of the subject I was considering, I emphasised his qualitative treatment of good as the naturalistic strain (and a very powerful one) in his thinking. And here I should like to make it clear that I do not think there are two ways in which a naturalistic theory of ethics can be developed. In my view (as I indicated on p. 132), if judgments of goodness are reduced to judgments of the existence of certain relations, then the theory of these relations is not ethics; it might, as I suggested, be economics or it might be some other branch of social or of psychological science, but the distinctive science of ethics would disappear. I do not consider, however, that it is possible to get rid of ethics. When I said (same page) that "Two consistent attitudes can be adopted", I was speaking loosely; I meant that one could correct the inconsistency involved in a conception which amalgamated quality and relation, by concentrating either on a qualitative meaning or on a relational meaning. Now, as I said there and elsewhere, there can be a positive theory of relations; but such a theory cannot avoid giving some account of the related things—in fact, it will not go far unless it correlates difference of relation with difference of quality, and the recognition of some particular qualities may be specially illuminating for it. The theorist of human relations, then, has to take account of human qualities and may go seriously wrong through ignoring certain of them—and inconsistency always goes with error. He might retain formal consistency by sticking to a few initial assertions, but it is otherwise when he *develops* a theory; and if, as I believe, there is a quality "goodness" in certain human activities, its presence or absence will make a difference to some human relations, and passing it over will occasion inconsistencies in the theory of these relations.

This sort of consideration would be relevant to a great part of Mr. A. D. Hope's argument. But, before getting to



grips with his views, I would point out that a naturalistic theory of a relational kind (or what is esteemed to be so) is the sort of theory that has regularly confronted normative theories, an unreservedly qualitative view having been scarcely represented in the history of the subject. Hence, if we take good to be a quality, we must regard normative theories, whatever their logical confusions, as having played a most important part in these controversies—as having, in their erection of an “absolute standard”, kept alive the sense of an absolute *quality*. Logical confusion will carry with it empirical error, but a real subject will still be adumbrated. Thus though it is only in Moore that the tension of the opposing strains approaches bursting-point (this being one reason why his doctrines are watered down by such thinkers as Ross), we can find in the generality of moralists, though in varying degrees, traces of a positive and non-mandatory view. Even so extreme a moralist as Kant may be said to convey some notion of qualitative goodness (of that which just is good, without further reference), though he confuses the conception of what, in this sense, is unconditionally good with the illogical conception of a good which does not, like everything else, exist under conditions: for to say that an X exists *only when* a Y exists is not to say that X is “relative” to Y or that Y has a “part” in X-ness. Criticism of Kant, then, might lead in the same direction as criticism of Moore; having seen the illogicality of the notion of an absolute imperative, we might come to consider, independently of imperatives, the quality from which the “absoluteness” takes its significance. Hegel’s criticism has something of this force, but it certainly does not eliminate “metaphysics” or the cult of the absolute. And the fact that Moore’s work has as background a very considerable development of positive theory in the intervening period, may help to account for its “explosive” force.

The essential point is that normative theories amalgamate different subjects, but the ruling out of one of them is not a solution. And it seems to me that much of Hope’s argument depends on the simple *assumption* of the truth of a relational

view. I do not think it is true, at any rate, that I gave no reason for rejecting such a view of goodness. What sort of reason *can* be given except by pointing to a quality, which is the quality in question? And how can one prove that it *is* the quality in question except by showing that it is one of the things that recognised moralists have talked about? Of course, the critic may say that he can detect no such quality, and in that case discussion comes to an end, unless one can show that various things he says imply that he does recognise such a quality. And, since it is impossible to carry out a personal analysis of all critics, we are brought back again to a sifting of "recognised" theories. That is the main way in which discussion can fruitfully proceed, but it requires all the time an acquaintance with specific sorts of things; and my endeavour to draw readers' attention to a kind of thing with which they had been long acquainted, and my suggestion that that was the sort of thing with whose characteristics moralists were struggling, were at least relevant to the disproof of a relational theory of goodness, though, as I said, I only gave the outline of an argument. It should be noted, of course, that on a qualitative theory goods will *have* relations, and the consideration of their relations may be of great importance for ethical theory; but to hold that it is does not in any way involve relativism. Similarly, it may be held that only those who live in a certain way can have a clear conception of goodness; but that would not in the least imply that their ethics was simply propaganda for their way of living.

Now in the outline referred to (the concluding part of my article) I drew specific attention (p. 137) to the fact that, allowing that children become acquainted quite early with something they can positively call good, this positive information comes to them so mixed up with admonitions that they have the greatest difficulty in arriving at a clear view of the matter later on. I do not, indeed, agree with the Freudians in their estimate of the importance of the family-situation; I consider that social forces, working through and beyond it, are mainly concerned in imposing compulsions on the child (cf. "Freudianism and Society", this Journal, June, 1940;

p. 75). But at least I have given some indication of how, on my view, goodness comes to be regarded as authoritative, and thus, over and above the formal objections to relativism, of how Moore can uphold a mandatory ethic. It is the confusion of the relation of command with the quality of goodness that leads to Moore's doctrine of the "indefinability" of good (since definition would force him to clear the matter up) and hence to his belief in ethical intuition. The important point here is not the operation of authority in the mind (on which question I should have thought the Freudian view, whatever weight we attach to it, was fairly familiar), but the attribution of authority to *goodness*. Of course, if there is no such positive thing as goodness, the more complicated question does not arise. But I think I am justified in saying that, in making it simply a question of the establishment of authoritative, unquestionable or "intuitive" judgments, Hope has ignored a great deal of my argument. If he had considered the possibility of regarding Moore as amalgamating authority and goodness, as mixing up two distinct but quite real subjects, and had found reason for rejecting it, he might properly have gone on to a consideration of the psychical determinants of judgments of the "authoritative or good". As it is, seeing that "intuition" involves authority, he has concluded that an account of the setting up of authority is all that is called for—thus begging the question of the existence of a second subject, and of special reasons why good should be cast for the authoritative part.

Apart from this, Hope is to a large extent knocking at open doors. No one denies that there are relational meanings of "good", nor, I think, does anyone deny that there are *causes* of our accepting something as mandatory (or "to be done"), though many might think that these causes are to be discovered in a consideration of social movements rather than in an analysis of mind. These points leave Moore's theory unaffected, and it is in other ways much stronger than would appear from Hope's account of it. I cannot see the point of his contention that our knowledge of intuition is not, for Moore, intuitive, and I am unable to find in §12 any appeal to observation "for confirmation of the difference between our



way of knowing 'good' and knowing yellow"; what I find, on the contrary, is the contention that, even if there were *no* difference between the modes of being (and presumably also between the modes of cognition) of these two entities, even if good were *natural*, it would still be fallacious to identify either of them with the subjects of which it is predicated—in other words, that, apart from all question of ways of knowing, a proposition is not an identity. I do not think Moore gives any account at all of how we are aware of intuition as a cognitive procedure; he has not even much to say about "intuitions" (objects of intuition), and my remarks on the subject were a rather "free" rendering of his position, emphasising the consequences of *any* distinction between ways of knowing or between ways of being. Perhaps the clearest presentation of his view is to be found in §36, where he says that in the work of hedonists prior to Sidgwick "we find no clear and consistent recognition of the fact that their fundamental proposition involves the assumption that a certain unique predicate can be directly seen to belong to pleasure alone among existents: they do not emphasise, as they could hardly have failed to have done had they perceived it, how utterly independent of all other truths this truth must be". And, while I think the criticisms I offered would apply well enough to that, it should in any case be clear that the position is devised to support the attribution of a certain "status" to good and that not even Moore would imagine that he had observed himself discovering this or going through any other process prior to being *struck* by the "ethical" fact.

But, apart from the question of "status", is there any real problem here? If Moore "can give no account of how he comes to recognise goodness", can he, and would he want to, give an account of how he comes to recognise anything else? If he "apparently has an immediate and vivid apprehension of goodness as a quality", how does this differ from the case of his apprehension of yellow? I hesitate to believe that Hope is maintaining a representational theory of knowledge, making out that there is some internal entity which "mediates" between us and yellow, and enables us to know it; such a

theory does not even show how we "come to recognise" the internal entity, let alone how that would help us to know the external one. But, if that is not the position, the most that can be meant by "how we come to know" anything is the conditions which must be present when we do know it. The prime condition, of course, is that it confronts us, and, apart from the difficulties involved in the conception of the "non-natural", Moore could say that there is no more difficulty in our knowing the goodness of something which confronts us and *is* good than in our knowing the yellowness of something which confronts us and *is* yellow. There are further conditions in each case (illustrated by my suggestion above that only participants in a certain way of living might be capable of knowing good), there are variations in powers of observation and discrimination; but, no matter how fully we state any such set of conditions, they will never show "how" we know the thing in question, in the sense of showing what enables them to enable us to know it or of "constituting" its cognisability. What we have is just that, when one thing happens, another thing happens.

Thus, if the influence of the "Super-ego" is one condition of the passing of an ethical judgment, this would not affect the discussion of such judgments themselves. Hope does in fact admit, as one possibility, that the Super-ego may simply cause the mind to observe good as a (real) quality of things. But that admission takes all point from the question "how we come to know" goodness and from the whole presentation of the Freudian theory of mental structure, and brings us back to the question of what we do find in the facts. It is not very clear what Hope means by the alternative suggestion that "this quality of good" is "only a rationalisation by the Ego of its attitude to conflicting demands in the Unconscious mind: what Freud calls 'projection'". The Ego, let us say, submits to demands of the sort A and resists demands of the sort B; is the position, then, that when it finds another Ego submitting to A or resisting B, it calls that action "good" (and calls resistance to A or submission to B "bad")? If so, what is the

force of the expression "rationalisation"? "Doing what I do is good"—that, whether it is tenable or not, seems a quite straightforward position, but it is in no sense a *defence* of "what I do" unless "good" has an independent meaning. And, if, prior to "projection", I call my own actions good, no special mechanism seems to be required to lead me to give the same description to similar actions by other people—but, in calling my own actions good, I certainly do not mean simply that they are my own actions. Or if, finally, goodness is ascribed to acts in obedience to some internal monitor ("Super-ego" or "conscience"), to speak of "rationalisation" seems in no way to show what is gained by the avoidance of a directly relational terminology—and, indeed, this cannot be explained unless some non-relational (qualitative) factor is being smuggled in, and in that case there must *be* such a factor. This is not to deny that the conceptions of goodness and badness have become associated with *authority*, but at least it casts doubt on the rejection of a qualitative meaning for them, and it indicates that the doctrine of "rationalisation" is no way of reducing what I have taken to be two subjects (commonly confused) to one.

Detailed criticism of the Freudian theory of mind would be out of place here, but something may usefully be said on Hope's considerable misrepresentation of Moore's psychological position and its connection with his ethics. There is not, I should say, the slightest justification for attributing to Moore a unitary view of mind. Whatever may be the objections to the "method of isolation", i.e., to the determination of a thing's "value" by considering whether it would be worth while that it alone existed (and I indicated some of them in my article), the very fact that Moore asks us to imagine a mind wholly occupied by one passion shows that he thinks of it as being ordinarily occupied by many different passions; and even if he treats states of mind as states of *consciousness*, so that "conflicting motives when they occur conflict in consciousness", this would scarcely be treating the mind as "a single conscious unit". It would seem rather to be Hope who believes



in the unity of consciousness, so that to save mental plurality he has to bring in the unconscious; at any rate, that Moore can speak of "a defiant hatred of evil dispositions in ourselves" (§131) shows that the doctrine of mental unity is not his. Now if knowledge of conscious states is to be called "introspection", Moore will certainly rely on introspection for knowledge of mind—but so will Freud, up to a point. But what Moore is appealing to, in applying his "method of isolation" in §125, is "intuition"; and that means in practice (leaving out of account the objections to some features of his view) an appeal to our considered judgment, to what we can see, with special reference to ethical characters, in the situation we are examining, *no matter how our knowledge was acquired*. And when he refers to the difficulty of determining the nature of the cognition by the presence of which "the pleasures of lust" are to be defined, he is certainly treating lust as a state of consciousness and his problem is to determine what is its object, i.e., what it is that the lustful person enjoys; but the difficulty may well be due precisely to "suspicion that introspection might have interests to promote", to unwillingness to accept the lustful person's word in the matter.

Hope's most serious distortion of Moore's meaning, however, occurs in his statement that in the final chapter (§113) "it is the value of the *consciousness* of beauty or of good which forms the fundamental truth of Moral Philosophy". The words "or of good" are a sheer importation; they convey the suggestion (borne out in Hope's further argument), the quite unjustified suggestion, that Moore confuses between consciousness as a feature of goods and consciousness as the judge of goods, that he treats consciousness as of supreme ethical importance because it makes ethical discoveries—a suggestion quite opposed to Moore's "objectivism". The fundamental truth of Moral Philosophy is, for Moore, that aesthetic enjoyment and personal affection are "by far the most valuable things that we know or can imagine". He refers to them, of course, as "states of consciousness"—on any view, they *involve* consciousness. In connection with the former he mentions that

he differs from Sidgwick in holding that the mere existence of beauty is good but agrees with him in taking its value to be negligible in comparison with that of "consciousness of beauty" (in other words, "aesthetic enjoyment", or in one word, *appreciation*). It is a question, then, not of the general thesis that consciousness is the key to goodness, but of the quite specific contention that appreciation is good. And if we reject (as I contended that we must) the doctrine of degrees of goodness, we may still think Moore has made a useful contribution to ethics in recognising appreciation and love as specific goods, things having goodness as a character. Again we might disagree with his view that certain non-mental things are good, while holding with him that those mental things which are good are conscious. This would have nothing to do with the fact that inquiry into ethics is a conscious procedure; at the same time it would not be rendered dubious by the mere fact that some mental processes are *unconscious*, or that they have an influence on our conscious behaviour. We are acquainted with the specific thing, aesthetic appreciation, and that means that we find specific characters in it.

This leads me to a brief consideration of Hope's remarks on "fictions". Apparently, for him, "aesthetic appreciation" would be an elliptical way of referring to the fact that somebody feels or thinks aesthetically, and it would not be appreciation that proceeded in any way but an appreciator. In putting forward this view Hope seems to have forgotten his earlier pluralism, to have replaced it by a doctrine of the unitary "person" who alone can do things. It would be a very curious account of mental qualities and mental history that could be erected on this basis. In my article I took for granted the plurality of mental entities (sentiments, passions or whatever they may be called) for which I have argued elsewhere—the existence of a society of "motives", having distinct characters and a certain capacity for independent action. I do not propose to traverse that ground again in this discussion but would observe that my view gains considerable corroboration from the work of Freud. A little may be said, however, on the

question of "activities". When I say that a thing has a certain activity, I mean that it goes on in a certain way, and this is the very same as saying that it has a certain quality. I should, then, no more speak of "activities *towards* things" than of "*qualities towards* things". At the same time, I should recognise no more of a logical distinction between *things* and qualities than between subjects and predicates—a matter which I touched on in my article. Thus I could refer to good as a quality or as a sort of thing or as a way of going on, considering as I do that any treatment of these as different types of entities leads to insoluble problems. Now good, on this view, will have relations, and it is possible that there are certain relations that all goods have and certain relations that only goods have. (Corresponding facts would, I take it, be admitted in the case of men.) And, while this is no reason for holding a relational view of good, it opens the way to such a view. All we can do, having recognised certain types of distinction, is to try not to overlook them in any given case. Taking the case of "inquiry", we see at once that this expression has a primarily relational sense, and the same is true of the expression "*scientific interest*". Yet, observing that this is one of many competing interests in a mind, we may be able to distinguish *what* is interested from its *being* interested in something. And, in referring to this interested thing as "the scientific spirit", I consider that I am distinguishing it qualitatively from other things in the same region. But, once such a quality had been distinguished, there would be no harm in using the term "inquiry" to refer both to the possession of the quality and to the possession of those relations which such things always have.

The same applies to love, appreciation, artistic creation and other goods; where a certain "spirit" exists, there are also certain special ways of interacting with surrounding things. In connection with my treatment of love as the first-recognised good, Hope saddles me with the view that its goodness resides in the fact that it promotes the child's "fundamental biological urges and needs". There was, of course, no suggestion of a



“biological ethic” in what I said. In associating the word “good” with love rather than with hate, the child is adopting the usage with which he is presented. Admittedly the usage is not without its obscurities and confusions, but it is sufficiently definite in most cases to enable the child to make a qualitative distinction, along with his recognition of authority. This, however, provides only a first rough indication of a field and, as I said, by no means ensures that the child will go on to have a developed theory. What can assist him to do so is his later experience of other sorts of goods and, above all, his encountering of the theories of the great moralists, for, although these contain much of a mandatory character, they also exhibit considerable insight into “ways of life”, into the “spirit” which animates various movements. And, in so far as they do so, they can give *him* an insight into the conditions of his own life, can lead him to a more coherent view of mental and social realities. He is not, then, tied to his early teaching, important though that may be, but has the continual stimulation of new facts and new theories. This description may apply to only a few cases, but, if it applies to any, progress in ethical science is possible. The vital question is whether anything but a qualitative ethics can give us a coherent view of the facts and enable us to see what even confused theories are aiming at. I do not think there can be a coherent view which does not recognise a qualitative distinction, similar in the various cases, between science and obscurantism, between art and philistinism, between the productive and the consumptive spirit, between love and hate, between freedom and servility, and recognise also relations of assistance among the various goods. And the sort of confirmation that can be obtained in the case of those who reject these contentions is the demonstration of incoherence in their own views.

I have, I think, brought out a fundamental inconsistency in Hope’s argument, as between his Freudian and his Benthamite material. This might be accidental; he might be able to uphold a relational view in one or the other way, while dropping what did not fit in. It seems to me, indeed, that the

Benthamite material could not be dropped, that any relational view of ethics is bound up with a unitary view of the "person"—though if, as I have suggested, there are logical objections to any doctrine of the unitary, this would only mean that incoherence would break out on a wider scale. But it is in the attempt to make his relational view specific, in his treatment of "approval", that Hope most decidedly reaches an impasse. Rejecting the contention that, on a relational view, the good must be equated with the demanded (a contention which he attributes to me, though I explicitly treated this equation as only one *example* of a relational view), he goes on to say: "Demands, attitudes, feelings, all types of emotional reactions would be involved, and any of them might be what we refer to when we characterise something as good." Actually, there are various types of "emotional reaction" which may be involved in demanding itself, as any economist would recognise. But the contention that *any* type of emotional reaction might be the determinant of our attribution of "goodness" to things leads us to look more closely at the nature of the determination; and, apart from the fact that the emotion of sorrow, e.g., can scarcely be held to generate judgments of goodness, we find that the notion of that "on the occasion of which" joy is felt (and which is accordingly judged good in that "reference") is an obscure one, that it can be made precise only as the "object" of joy (what is enjoyed), and that that means as what is *demanded* by joy—and so in other cases. Thus Hope has provided no alternative to "demandedness", and he certainly gives no indication of how "a large number of attitudes to things some of which might be in direct conflict with others" can possibly "constitute a relation *sui generis*".

It is hard also to follow him in his treatment of ethics as concerned with only a *part* of our attributions of goodness to things, viz., that in which emotional relations of approval and disapproval are involved. But, whatever he means here by "approval", he can be forced, I consider, to take up one of two attitudes—either to treat it as equivalent to demanding, or to treat it as recognition of objective goodness. In what way,

except as judgment of the occurrence of a quality, can approving be distinguished from demanding? There can be no distinction on the side of the approved; it, like the demanded, is something whose existence or continuance we desire. (If it were suggested that the approved is what we desire in the way of human behaviour, that would make it just a species of the demanded and would indicate no reason for separating consideration of it from that of other objects of demand or for speaking of a special attitude of "approval".) But, if the distinction is on the mental side, that will only mean that we are considering the demands of some particular sentiment, not that we have got away from "demanding" to something else, "approving"; and, as before, distinction between what demands in one case and what demands in another does not require a separate theory of each demander—their interrelations might be very important. I hold, then, that there is no steady ground on which Hope can rest except the recognition of objective goodness, that in his very use of the term "approval" he is implicitly conceding what he has denied. A distinction, however, should be made here. It would appear from what I have argued above that I should take "approval" to mean the recognition of a certain spirit in human activities. But it is obvious that there are other usages of the term; and the point would be that they are various compromises between the ethical meaning and "demanding", and that only by distinguishing that meaning can we take a coherent view of the whole set of usages.

In conclusion, I should like to express a certain impatience with the recurrent contention that what I, in my inquiries into ethics, find to be good are simply those things which I "favour" or "support"—impatience, i.e., with the ridiculous over-working of the conception of support. The scientific question is how things themselves work; and whatever may be the relations of assistance and of resistance among forms of human behaviour, they do not depend on conscious choice. Such choice is incidental to them; and, in general, choice plays little part in human life.



## REVIEWS.

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JOHN HENRY MUIRHEAD: REFLECTIONS BY A JOURNEYMAN IN PHILOSOPHY ON THE MOVEMENTS OF THOUGHT AND PRACTICE IN HIS TIME. Edited by John W. Harvey. Allen and Unwin, 1942. Pp. 215. Price: 15s.

It is difficult to conceive of any greater tribute to a philosopher than that which Messrs. Allen and Unwin have paid to the memory of Professor Muirhead. At a time when the war has made the life of a publisher into a nightmare by simultaneously creating severe paper shortage and a public avid for books, and ready to buy them, Allen and Unwin have spent some of their meagre ration of paper, and that of their best paper, on publishing Professor Muirhead's autobiography. The tribute is worthy both of the philosopher, of the firm, and of the book. It was Professor Muirhead who, as the General Editor of the three-year-old Library of Philosophy, included in it F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, rejected though this was by no less a publishing body than that of the Clarendon Press, and it was Allen and Unwin who without a murmur accepted the verdict of the Editor. But the Marthas of the world may well murmur, "But is it right to spend paper on a mere autobiography of a mere philosopher at the present time?" The answer is to be found in the autobiography. As an autobiography in the usual sense of the word the book is a failure, for the last person described in it is J.H.M. himself—as all who knew him suspected from the first. He knew how to write of Edward Caird, of Sir Henry Jones, of F. H. Bradley, of Bernard Bosanquet; to write about himself was as foreign to him as to intrude himself upon any one. He was to himself only a sign-post to something greater than himself, or, to vary the metaphor, a means of bringing ideas to life, be these ideas the General Will, the Social Good, Right Living, or those of education and philosophy in their narrower sense. It is this combination of philosophy and practice which makes the book so valuable just at the

present moment, when we are faced with the counterfeit of the Hegelian tradition, equally carried into practice; it is also this which makes the book within the philosophical world an answer to those who glory in the idea that "philosophy is of no use whatsoever". In the autobiography we find vivid accounts of the principal reforms for which we have to thank the late Victorian and Georgian eras, from the reform of the Poor Law to the establishment of civic universities, religious freedom, and the reform of the British Army in 1915; we are shown not only the people who carried through these reforms, but also the philosophical training and convictions which prompted them first to plan the reforms and then to carry them through. To readers of this Journal, who are alive to part of the meaning which a university may have for the community in which it is set, the chapters dealing with the establishment of and the work carried on by the great provincial university of Birmingham will be specially interesting. The more technical philosopher cannot afford to neglect a book dealing with the life of philosophy from T. H. Green to Bergson, by a keen observer and fellow-philosopher who came into vital contact with practically all of his great contemporaries. The chapter arising from Professor Muirhead's lectures in America, given after his retirement from the Chair of Philosophy in Birmingham, shows us the first beginning of the movement which has led to that revival of speculative philosophy in the United States which we are just beginning to discover in this country. Till the very end of his long life Professor Muirhead kept up his writing and thinking. Indeed, his two greatest, direct contributions to philosophy, *Coleridge as Philosopher* and *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*, were not published till 1930 and 1931 respectively, and were followed in 1932 by his trenchant, and ever courteous, criticism of contemporary work in *Rule and End in Morals*.

The Editor has deserved well of philosophers for bringing the story to a close in a vivid, final chapter, and for including Professor Jessop's excellent bibliography of

Professor Muirhead's books and occasional writings as well as the short tribute of Dr. Helen Wodehouse to her uncle. If the former shows us the importance which Muirhead had for philosophy, the latter shows us a little of the man who, as Professor de Selincourt said, was "among the most lovable of men, and the most worthy of love".

GRETA HORT.

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THE DIFFICULT CHILD AND THE PROBLEM OF DISCIPLINE. By C. W. Valentine, Professor of Education in the University of Birmingham. Methuen; London, 1940. Pp. 104. Price: 4s. net.

"THIS little book is addressed to students of the psychology of childhood and especially of difficult children, and to parents and teachers who are trying to get from the study of psychology some light on the problems of discipline and of the difficult child. In particular, I have tried to deal with some ideas which are receiving widespread attention and which masquerade as sound psychology, but which seem to be both untrue and harmful. Some of the more technical points of psychology are dealt with in footnotes, and references are given which will help the student to further reading.

"After the first impulse to hold the book up until after the war, there came the realisation that problems of discipline were being accentuated by the increased disorganisation of education and of family life" (Preface).

Valentine persistently refers to 'this little book', and the characterisation is precise, both as regards size and significance. The naïveté which expects social conditions, especially during a war, to be altered by a slim 'popular' treatment of aspects of child psychology is reflected continuously throughout the text, and even on the basis of warning those who know nothing of psychological theories that some of those theories are wrong or unjustified it is difficult to attach any value to the method of approach to the problems, which is sentimental and unscientific.



Yet, by its very simplemindedness, this book throws into startling clarity one of the fundamental weaknesses of contemporary psychology. To remove the concept of the "normal" is to remove the foundation of Valentine's curious eclecticism, just as it strikes at the root of the doctrines of the psychologists among whom he browses for confirmation and suggestion.

The term "normal" has a variety of intended meanings, from "average" and "usual" to the morally "approved" or "correct". Its currency is such that no theorist, genuinely concerned with his subject, can afford to overlook the problem of its meaning, yet it is uncritically accepted on every side.

In the main, it is used of functions. Things work, mentalities develop, "normally". Yet even of "things" the meaning is not regularly apparent. To say that a motor engine is running normally means, simply enough, that it is working as it was designed to do. An engine is made for a specific purpose, and the fulfilment of that purpose is all that is demanded. The "nature" of an engine is taken to be such as was intended, though even here the notions of "to the best advantage" or "as usual" still complicate the issue, since individual variations are characteristic of even mass-produced engines; but some significance attaches to "normality" when a precise function is accepted as the natural. Once we proceed to the question of things not designed for specific purposes it becomes necessary to decide upon a function which is natural to the thing: a decision usually based upon the childish attribution to things of purposiveness, whether as animistically purposive or as fitting in with our purposes, consistently satisfying our desires. If it can be established that a specific function is characteristic of a class, then to accept that as normal may be useful but is seldom, if ever, an adjunct to theory. The knowledge that roses grow and reproduce in a consistent manner is, for the botanist, a means of establishing a genus or species: the notion that such a thing *should be* the case is that of a market gardener, one who is concerned with making roses do certain things, although here, in contrast

with the position in educational theory, the abnormal may have a special value assigned to it.

Because the demands we make of such things are fairly simple, the problem of the normal is not acute. The functions demanded are easily distinguished: the botanist proceeds to questions of how, rather than why, and the moral tinge is unimportant. Nevertheless, from such scientific fields the notion of the normal, of the fixed species, the final end, emerges, uncriticised because unimportant, to carry over into moral spheres. In ethics, in psychology, in sociology, the "best way of working", "the natural way of working", "the most efficient way of working", "the most generally satisfying way of working", are all delightfully intermingled; in educational theory, drawing as it does upon each of these fields, political and social demands knot these uncriticised and multitudinous notions into a frantic confusion.

What alone can lend any significance to "normality" is a functional consistency: to apply the term implies a theory that such a way of working is characteristic of an organisation. Its basis is the basis of simple observation, a seeing of how things work, or of things in process. In psychology, the process is the same: the first demand is for a theory, an account, of a way of working, and if the term "normal" is to be applied to mental development it can attain significance only if a theory of mentality is propounded. To argue that quarrelling between brothers is "normal", implying "not to be worried about because it is usual", and to make the observation not the beginning but the end of inquiry, is to adopt the market gardener attitude, and think in terms of alteration, of adapting the child to the demands of others or confessing inability to do so. In educational theory this attitude is plain. The normal child is one who fits in with the demands of teachers, parents, citizens generally, the social group, the state, or, masking the whole issue, a curious "society" which is not inquired into but taken as fixed, immutable and wholly to be approved. The refusal of contemporary psychologists to raise questions of a theory of society is as firm as their

refusal to raise questions of a theory of mind. "Normal" is in terms of specific demands—of whom? The refusal to approach the sociological problem leaves the question unanswered. Certain moralities are assumed as the basis. The market gardener does not question the nature of the market.

This last is reflected in the schools of experimental psychology, lost in the wilds of tests and mathematics of abilities and averages, which can achieve meaning only in terms of such a theory or theories; it is reflected in their attitude to psycho-analysis, their lack of acquaintance with the material and utter lack of conception of what the movement is striving to do. Valentine gives excellent illustrations. In a footnote (p. 9) he refers to "medical men who have learned much from the modern psychology of the unconscious, without adopting Freud's views *in toto*". Such a statement is common, yet a meagre acquaintance with Freudian literature on the part of a genuine intellectual interest would reveal the fact that the notion of "Freudian views *in toto*" is utterly inane. There is no such thing as *a* Freudian theory. The literature is a tremendous collection of observations, hypotheses, conclusions, orientations, assimilations, embodying with whatever confusions and weaknesses an attempt to develop a theory of mentality. Five pages later, Valentine refers to Freud's "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety", quoting "Signs of childhood neuroses can be detected in all adult neurotics . . . but by no means all children who show these signs become neurotic in later life". Even this much might serve to make him reconsider some of the puerile criticisms of Freud in other sections; but of the significance of the succeeding sentences he makes nothing. For Freud these observations are the beginning of a theoretical venture, an attempt to explain the functionings of mental process. The book itself is a survey of past hypotheses, in light of new; it discards, re-phrases, and insistently stresses the small progress made. For Valentine, it becomes a comforting maxim: don't worry, because even if you show these compulsions you may grow up to be "exceptionally well-balanced



and stable in temperament and character". "Parents and teachers, therefore, need not be unduly alarmed at the occasional occurrence of such compulsions in the child, *though the persistence of one dominant type of compulsion may sometimes be the sign of an outlet* for a repressed impulse." (The emphasis is mine: the vagueness of his statement is as irritating as the exclamation points which conclude so many of Valentine's "brilliant" examples.) Consider such a passage as this (p. 10) [an argument against the "evidence of sex development in early childhood" offered by some (unspecified) psycho-analysts, "the fact that mere infants of one or two years will play with their genitals, and masturbation may sometimes be persistent through later infancy"]—"But a normal baby of one or two loves to handle and play with anything within reach. He begins with his own fingers, nose, hair, toes, and so on, and the genitals naturally come in for some examination. Even granting that such repeated playing of this kind suggests a pleasure more decided than that gained in playing with the hands and feet, there is no ground for supposing that pleasure to be intense, except in the smaller number of abnormal cases which have been observed: and even in such cases there is no evidence that it is accompanied by any traces of the sex impulse proper, though it may well be a sign of precocity and exceptional strength of the sex impulse later." A similar 'argument' appears earlier on the same page. "No doubt where there is persistent or intense interest in the sex apparatus, even after normal curiosity should have been satisfied, there is probably some premature and excessive development of sex in the child. But in most families still, I imagine, natural curiosity is far from fully satisfied."

Normal and abnormal become, largely, substitutes for approved and disapproved, or "not to be worried about" and "disconcerting". The position is reflected in the modern trend to provide special accommodation, teachers, and equipment for "sub-normals" and "super-normals", with corresponding diminution of attention to the "normal". It is

emphasised by the enlightened distinction between "problem" and "normal" children, reminiscent of the Army tendency to divide religions into Catholic and non-Catholic owing to sparsity in supply of protestant denominational clergy. Consider how much published work is based upon such terms as the following (or their equivalents)—delinquent children, defective homes, socially mal-adjusted, undesirable behaviour, difficult children, harmonious homes, good citizens ("Made and Remade", by H. A. George and L. B. Stone), together with the curious activities and "theorisings" of the clinics, vocational guidance institutions, and handbooks of child psychology. The whole orientation is social: the demands are social, not scientific. The question is of doing or producing, shaping or reshaping, the "social workers" and "psychologists" equally acting at the behest of unrecognised or uncriticised social and political forces, turning from discovery and theory to justification and moral babbling. The science is supplied so often by mathematics and comic evidence, as in the case of Valentine's treatment of Freud's statement with regard to the connection between thumb-sucking in infancy and certain oral-erotic traits in specific patients.

"Consider, for example, the assertions made by some medical psycho-analysts who have found a number of difficult or neurotic children showing certain characteristics or habits, say thumb-sucking or violent temper-tantrums. There is a tendency to say that these symptoms are associated with some misconduct or nervous trouble of the child or adult *without any enquiry as to how frequently these same traits are found in normal children*. For example, Freud himself connects habitual and perverse kissing in adults with thumb-sucking in infancy; in the men, there is a marked desire for drinking and smoking, while, as to women, he says: 'Many of my female patients showing disturbances in eating, choking sensations and vomiting, have been energetic thumb-suckers during infancy.' He does not refer to the possibility of, let us say, half the number of *normal* children being thumb-suckers of this kind; in which case, of course, it would be likely that

half his patients would have been thumb-suckers in childhood, without there being any connection whatever between the two things. As a matter of fact, a recent enquiry in which sixty 'problem' children, ages 2;0 to 6;0 and sixty normal children of similar ages in a nursery school were compared, gave the following results. Out of the sixty problem children, twenty-six were thumb-suckers; among the normal group, who were causing no difficulty, twenty-eight were also thumb-suckers. So thumb-sucking was found in nearly half the children, and was rather more frequent among the normal children" (p. 13; italics in text).

With the conclusion of this experiment quoted from W. W. Blatz and J. D. M. Griffin (*An Evaluation of the Case Histories of a Group of Pre-School Children*) there can be no quarrel. The numbers balance. But any connection between Valentine's "argument" and Freud's statement is simply not to be found; Valentine's propositions have not the same terms as Freud's.

The 'complete' quotation from the 'Three Contributions' is as follows: "Not all children suck their thumbs. It may be assumed that it is found only in children in whom the erogenous significance of the lip zone is constitutionally reinforced. If the latter is retained in some children, they develop into kissing epicures with a tendency to perverse kissing, or as men, they show a strong desire for drinking and smoking. But should repression come into play, they then show disgust for eating and evince hysterical vomiting. By virtue of the community of the lip-zone, the repression encroaches upon the instinct of nourishment. Many of my female patients showing disturbances in eating such as hysterical globus, choking sensations and vomiting, have been energetic thumbsuckers in infancy" (*Basic Writings*, p. 586).

This is a statement of observation and the beginnings of a theory of functional development, a suggested link between breast-feeding and later importance of the lips in sexual relations. In order to 'contradict' the theory, to show it to be false, something more is necessary than a group of numerical estimates which achieve connection only by confused



theories (implied, as all statistics imply theories of the nature of what is estimated) of normality, abnormality, and causality, together with elementary logic.

The heading of the section in which this appears is: *Fallacies about the signs of abnormality and with respect to evidence*. He continues (p. 15): "Some psycho-analysts of the type we have just mentioned seem to have little sense of evidence and frequently write as though they had hardly ever come into contact with *normal* children." (My emphasis: it is not the "unacquainted with children, only with neurotic Viennese adults" argument.) It might be remarked of Valentine that he shows in this book not the slightest notion of theory, and consequently has not the slightest notion of evidence. Special cases he gives from his own family circle reveal the basis on which he considers evidence. He mentions (p. 6): (1) Occasional violent tempers in a boy 2;0 to 2;6, at times rolling on the ground with rage, sometimes it seemed merely through frustration of his wishes. As this proved 'consistent with development into an exceptionally equable temperament in young manhood' there was apparently nothing to it. It was all right, and merits no further consideration. It just happened. So with case (2), of hysterical fears at night (seeing 'horrid' faces, etc.) in a girl of 3;0, which proved troublesome over a considerable period, but which proved consistent with a marked stability of emotion later, with an unusual absence of fears of all kinds—darkness, animals, rough seas, burglars, and with a passion for aeroplane flying. Once again, because Valentine is satisfied with the result, nothing is there for explanation or investigation. Triumphantly he exclaims, 'Yet I find the director of a Child Guidance Clinic declares that night fears are a sign of a nervous child!' Case (3) is that of an outburst of violent temper in another girl of 2;6, in which she struck a maid with a knife and afterwards boasted, 'I did bleed her!' Yet this child grew up to be extremely sympathetic to pain in other people and animals.

The conclusion is: "Rage, cruelty, hysterical fears *may* certainly appear at various stages in the development of healthy, happy and intelligent children. One investigation indeed suggests that a difficult period of revolt against discipline—between the ages of 2;0 and 4;0—is usually a good sign. H. Helzer for example reports that of 100 such children, 84 developed normally as to 'will': while of 100 who had no such period of revolt, only 26 developed normally, the others revealing feeble wills."

What Valentine, then, is prepossessed with, is the notion of normality as a divinely preordained path, which man must traverse. If a child is normal, nothing is to be explained, because the normal is something entirely different from the accidental; the child is simply on the right path, and only 'aberration' demands study. And if the child appears unusual now, he may after all develop into a normal, efficient causes being accidental and to be frowned upon, to be numbered but not really seriously discussed. Because the child *may* develop as it is desired, there is no need for worrying . . . or theorising. So much for the Introduction. Later it appears permissible to do a little changing of environment, and we must recognise that 'great changes take place at adolescence for good or evil'.

The following lengthy quotation (p. 32) will serve to show what passes for psychology:

"On the effects of early entry into the Nursery School some competent observers claim that to some extent earlier entry into the school hastened social development. The new-comer of 2 years at first takes little interest in others, but after a shy period he begins to respond to friendly advances, though at time he may 'hit out' and watch the effects. (See K. Bridges, *Social and Emotional Development of the Pre-School Child*, p. 83.) He soon finds that the experiment does not pay. By about 3 he wants to play in pairs or groups of three or four. Quite commonly at 3;0 he 'comforts and helps others in distress; and by 3-4 verbal criticism of one another's conduct begins.'

"Of course, all is not peace in the group. Obstinance and aggression appear also by 2 and 3, but these surely must be taken as normal developments. As we have seen, it may, perhaps, be regarded as a bad sign if a child, especially a boy, is 'too good' at the age of 2 and 3.

"Excessive assertiveness or quarrelsomeness, however, will receive some checking from the rest of the children; and this may be one of the main values of early mixing with other children, especially when the only alternative is the society of a doting mother who gives way to every tantrum.

"An interesting experiment was carried out in this very point of the training of one child by another of the same age. (See I. G. Mengert, *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, Sept., 1931, Vol. 39, p. 393.) Ten children, two years old, were put in pairs in a little playroom together for twenty minutes and watched by an invisible observer. They were provided with toys. The number of friendly and unfriendly acts of each child were counted. Within a period of a few weeks each child was paired with each of the others. Three main facts emerged. (i) There were enormous differences. Child B performed 110 friendly and only 2 unfriendly acts; Child G performed 107 friendly acts and 3 unfriendly acts; whereas the least friendly child, C, performed 78 friendly acts and 56 unfriendly acts. (ii) Even in this short time the proportion of friendly to unfriendly acts increased by about 50 per cent. (iii) There was also a clear tendency for the most friendly children to receive the greatest number of unfriendly acts!"

The exclamation point is Valentine's, but it will probably represent the reader's astonishment also. And what is the conclusion?

"Even at this early age, then, little children begin to 'train' one another, though it does not follow that such training is always of a desirable kind" (pp. 33-34). One might remark that it is good, under most circumstances, to be very cautious in one's statements, lest one actually say something.



The 102 pages of text are divided into two sections, "Psychology and the Difficult Child", and "The Problem of Discipline". The four sections of the first part, Introduction (Some unjustified assertions as to the psychology of early childhood), Heredity versus Environment, Is Character Determined by the Early Years? and The Treatment of Problem Children and the Work of the Child Guidance Clinic, are covered in 43 small pages, and this will indicate the impossibility of a serious treatment of the topics listed. It is difficult to see the value for any person, even the student for whom numerous references are given as footnotes, in what has been attempted. The parents and teachers may derive confirmation of certain of their maxims, but little more. Possibly it may 'serve as a warning against too hurried acceptance of some modern theories', as Valentine hopes in his conclusion, but 'as a guide to further and more substantial studies' it seems unlikely to prove more effective than other attempts at popularisation of 'science'. Nor are such attempts unconnected with the poverty of educational theory, and the general debasement of education today; for a vague and indefinite acquaintance with theory is too often the characteristic of those who wield educational authority.

A. M. RITCHIE.

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EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY. By J. D. G. Medley. Melbourne, 1943. Pp. 31. Price: 6d.

THIS is the first of a series of pamphlets to be issued by the Australian Council for Educational Research, under the general title "The Future of Education". The series, Mr. Medley tells us, is "designed to emphasise the vital importance at the present time of devising a real plan of education for the future", and Professor H. Tasman Lovell, who as President of the Council contributes a Foreword, expresses the hope that the pamphlets "may prove a useful contribution to reconstruction". It is clear that "research" in the Council's view, is concerned with "practical" problems, with deter-

mining what is to be done and not simply what is the case—clear, also, that this approach assumes what is *not* the case, viz., that we should all agree about what is “desirable” (about what would be “a better world after the war”) though we may have doubts about how to get it. For if some of us do not share the aims of our educational reformers, we may attach no importance at all to any “real plan” that they might devise. And while it may be impossible for anyone to discuss education without indicating to some extent what he supports and what he opposes, any research worthy of the name will take constant account of the controversial character of these questions and will give serious consideration to the social conditions determining the adoption of divergent views and programmes. If, as seems likely, advocacy is to play a large part in subsequent issues, the series will contribute little to an understanding of actual trends in education.

The view that education is the key to society, that the way to have a better society is to have a better education, is plausible enough on the level of popular thinking, but one would expect professedly informed discussion to show some awareness of its difficulties and to provide some argument against opposing views—if only to the extent of considering disputes as to what is “better”. After all, it is nearly a hundred years since Marx (third thesis on Feuerbach) attacked the conception of education as the agent of social change, pointing out the artificiality of the division of society into those who were to be improved through the improvement of their conditions and those who, presumably, had mastered their conditions and were to do the improving. And it was very little later that he and Engels, in the “Communist Manifesto”, criticised those Utopians who resolved history into the propagation and carrying out of “social plans”. (The suggestion is, of course, in both cases, that the reformers represented a particular interest or way of living—and criticism of their professed disinterestedness would consist in showing what that interest was.) In fact, according to Marxism, social conditions not merely determine the adoption

of views and programmes but determine what happens in considerable independence of what people believe and propose. Now the voluntarist may find it very hard to grasp this position, to see even what is *meant* by maintaining that the ideological struggle is incidental to a deeper social conflict; but, in view of the very great influence that Marxism has had during the past century, he may be expected to put up a case against it and not to ignore the doctrine of social struggle and the possibility of a class origin (or the colouring by some particular interest) of his own views. It is rather late in the day to be posing such simple questions as what "we", in everybody's interest, shall do with educational institutions.

But, of course, these phenomena have to be looked at against the background of war, which puts Marxism, and social criticism generally, at a discount and gives an impetus to the voluntarist way of thinking. It is one of the aims of war propaganda to get people to believe that "all this" is not to happen again and that it can be averted by eliminating or subduing ill-disposed powers and letting the well-disposed powers operate freely. The theoretical weakness of this position is obvious enough; the "well-disposed" showed no capacity in the past for anticipating or controlling events, and the formula of "eliminating the ill-disposed" does not on the face of it indicate any growth in competence, any deeper insight into world affairs. In fact, it is such as to cover the same advancing of special interests and ignoring of difficulties as led to the present turmoil. Yet, though critics may murmur "The devil was sick", there are plenty of the uncritical who will accept the admonition to avoid "post-mortems" and look to the future, who are eager for the new dispensation and so permit their rulers to absolve themselves from responsibility for present ills. That is one main condition of the spread of voluntarist ideas and the belief in "goodwill" as the social panacea.

But that is only half the story. "Reconstruction" propaganda is aimed not merely at maintaining present submissive attitudes but at facilitating future developments

and particularly the trend, observable all over the world, towards centralisation. To represent this as the approach to the reign of goodwill seems, once more, a highly implausible position, but it has its appeal to those who have become discouraged in the struggle to influence events and also to those who can envisage themselves as sharing in the work of "guidance"—and these are the people who are most concerned in the propagation of the belief in a "new order". This is not to say that their activity is the chief factor in bringing about such an order; it can help to determine some of the details but in the main it is symptomatic of, and adapted to, a development which is taking place independently. None the less the acceleration of the tendency towards centralised control gives fresh opportunities to the devotees of guidance, gives them the chance in particular to put some of their rivals out of business, and this is in accordance with the monopolistic character of the whole process. Now if it were recognised that "planning" means monopoly, it could not readily be associated with democracy or with "education" in any sense other than regimentation. And it is here that the posing of the question in the form "How shall we reconstruct?" has its usefulness—it covers over the critical question, "What social interest does 'reconstruction' represent?", and it prevents consideration of the view of democracy which historical determinism would oppose to the doctrines of the voluntaristic "reformers".

That view, taking its departure from the contentions that institutions have their own history and that this is a history of struggles, would take democracy to reside in the openness, the publicity, of struggle and not in devotion to a postulated "general interest". It would reject the conception of institutions as devices whereby people attain certain ends and maintain, on the contrary, that it is only *within* institutions that policies have any meaning. This is not to deny that institutions are interrelated, that other institutions are affected in special ways by political institutions, that there are important relations between publicity in society at large and



publicity in such a special field as education. But whatever these relations may be (and the study of them has been greatly impeded by the Marxist reduction of all social diversity to a single conflict), the diversity and independence of institutions, and of interests operating within each institution, remain.

If, then, we consider the history of educational institutions themselves, we shall find it largely taken up with the struggle between the development of inquiry (education in the strict sense) and opposing forces which regularly come in the guise of "social utility" and frequently take the form of State interference. And any attempt to enforce a view of what education shall be, inevitably interferes with inquiry. There can be fruitful (democratic) interaction between education and politics; it may be argued indeed (as I have argued elsewhere) that a thorough education is necessarily political. But political training is not thorough unless it involves preparation for struggle and criticism of the doctrine of social unity. A case in point is the outrageous denial of educational facilities to Victorian school-children who are not prepared to accept social unity ("loyalty") as a dogma. It will be argued, of course, that they are accepting the protection of that which they refuse to acknowledge. But the question whether there is a protective "system" or a conditional adjustment among divergent interests is just the matter in dispute. It is a greatly encouraging sign, on the other side, that a majority of Australians have in the recent elections refused to subscribe to a unity without diversity, have shown some realisation of the fact that agreement is only within limits and that a complete sinking of their special interests ("putting their liberties in pawn") merely means submission to the special interests of a minority.

As the reader will have gathered, there is no suggestion, in Medley's pamphlet, of criticism of the doctrine of social unity; "education in citizenship", "learning the difficult lesson of co-operation", are the burden of his song. He recognises such obstacles as timidity and laziness but has nothing to say about the utilisation of educational institutions in

the service of special (commercial) interests. He involves himself at the very outset in the vicious circle to which Marx drew attention. "Any system of society—call it what you will—is no better and no worse than the system of education which it fosters": so runs his first "general proposition". Thus, to improve society we have to improve education, but to improve education we have to improve society. The assumption is, of course, that there is a body of improvers who stand, as Marx put it, "above society", and presumably get their own education by revelation from on high; but, if that is so, what becomes of the "proposition"? And, if there were such a superior order, what reason would there be for thinking that it would undermine its position by "the provision of a genuine equality of opportunity for all citizens"? The error here lies in the notion of "provision"; it is fashionable at present to counterpose equality and liberty, but, in fact, genuine equality depends on people's own efforts and is not something that can be bestowed.

On this question Medley himself is uneasy. Having outlined his scheme of "real equality", distinguishing the pigeon-holes into which people may be fitted (he believes in "vocational guidance", it need scarcely be said), he remarks (pp. 24, 5): "It is easy to criticise the whole idea on the grounds that there will be no difference in fact between the society I have outlined and a totalitarian state. The difference can only be one of spirit—the spirit of man as opposed to that of the machine—and that difference can only be maintained by seeing to it that education in citizenship does not stop short with the school." So on p. 13: "What we must do is to realise now that the only difference between civilised societies in the future will be a difference not of social and administrative machinery, but of spirit—a difference between societies inspired by the spirit of man and those inspired by the spirit of the machine. It will be no use crying like children after spilt democracy. We must lift our eyes to a new order and see that it is one of our own making. If we resolve that it must be a democratic one, *we* must start here and now to

*make our people* fit to have it, for if they are not fit it will not come to them" (my italics). Actually, the antithesis of spirit and machinery is a false one (like Lovell's antithesis of "the nurture of persons" and "the teaching of subjects", in the foreword); a particular spirit has its particular modes of operation, and the organisation of an educational institution, e.g., may be such as to kill or greatly weaken the spirit of inquiry. What Medley's "difference of spirit" amounts to is a difference of name—regiment the people, have them all giving the maximum of service to the machine (not forgetting the extreme importance of "physical education" and "fitness"), but *call* the system "democratic" and it won't be totalitarian.

The insubstantiality of Medley's "democracy" can be made manifest by a few further citations. Having described democracy as a system in which a large majority of citizens play a significant part in "the common business of the community", he goes on (p. 10) to give as his second general proposition, "We are resolved that our system of society will after the war become a 'democratic' one". But then he says (p. 12): "If my definition of a democratic society be accepted, it is clear that we have never been a democracy. It is clearer still that after the war we shall be even less of a democracy than we were before it"—which presumably means that there will be a *loss* of participation in public affairs. And this is illustrated, lower down, by the assertion: "Peace must bring with it, if it is to be effective, an advance to a society based far more upon communal and less upon individual effort than has been the case in the past"—from which we might extract the sound conclusion that loss of independence means loss of democracy, though we might not call that "an advance". But then again, on p. 14, Medley informs us that "We are not a physically fit people. . . . We are not a mentally fit people. . . . And all these things must be mended if our new democracy is to have a chance of existence." What is to be inferred from all this except that our "new" democracy will not be democracy at all?

That conclusion is reinforced by the further argument on p. 14. "Isn't it merely common sense to insist that a state which expects its citizens to play their part in its business should see to it that they are physically and mentally capable of doing so? And how can the state do this except by compelling them to become and to remain as fit as they can be both in body and mind? That is the only way to afford equality of opportunity and the only way to make our democracy possible." It will make a difference to the common-sense of the matter if we conceive the state as concerned with the interrelations among many institutions or ways of living and not as a total organisation of which they are subordinate parts (a view of an essentially militaristic character). And it is clear that that which exercises general compulsion is not that in which there is general participation but is a special interest of some kind. The kind of interest that requires physical fitness is not doubtful—and what can be meant by "mental fitness" except submissiveness and adaptability to an allotted task? Could there be a more philistine way of describing the cultivation of the mind? But, if that is seriously in question, can "mental fitness" be exhibited otherwise than in critical thinking? And can critical thinking be compelled? Does it develop otherwise than in independent institutions and, to a large extent, against "the state", i.e. as criticism of the system of rights which prevails at any given time, and in the attempt to force re-adjustment? Such opposition is in fact the condition of democracy, and the assumption of a total interest, or of a central organisation which brings everything else under its wing, is anti-democratic. Neither democracy nor education can exist without controversy, they cannot exist without initiative, without spontaneous movements of the "rank-and-file", and the greatest danger to both is the spurious agreement involved in submission to the "expert", the official judge of "fitness" and "unfitness".

The details of the scheme of "equality of opportunity" do not matter very much. "Reform" of the curriculum follows



familiar lines. "There should be at school leaving age—say 15 (plus)—a leaving certificate based on five main divisions—English, elementary mathematics, social science, general science and one other containing a wide variety of options. After it there should be retained in the educational system at the expense of the State wherever necessary all those who have any possibility of benefiting from higher education and they should undergo a two years' course of the kind which the Americans describe as 'orientation' or 'foundational'—(say) 50 per cent. general subjects of a background character, 40 per cent. preliminary specialist or technical training and 10 per cent. physical, including if possible a period or periods in a labour camp engaged in manual work of national importance. At the end of this course—aged 18—those who have had all the higher education of which they are capable should be ruthlessly turned into the world, irrespective of their own desires or their economic position" (p. 19). One may question the use of the expression "higher" here; at any rate, we still have control by the infallible expert and the very opposite of democracy. The development of democracy in the schools would require a freer, more critical treatment of existing subjects (particularly language and literature, as culturally fundamental) in which there is a coherent body of knowledge within the capacity of school pupils. But what sort of mastery of "social science" can they have? Presumably the "subject" would consist of odds and ends of information about the working of social and economic institutions, backed up by "social unity" propaganda and sermons on "citizenship" and "fitness", i.e. by the assumption of the very things a real social science would call in question.

The fate of universities is left a little obscure. It is suggested that professional courses could be made more "humane", but at the same time "the idea that a technical education is in some way socially inferior to other kinds must disappear into the limbo of things best forgotten. Both tradition and convenience will continue to necessitate that certain branches of specialised training will be carried on in

universities which, side by side with that training, emphasise the value of 'pure' knowledge and research as an essential accompaniment to any form of social progress. But the university of the future cannot arrogate to itself any monopoly of the educational stratosphere, and the sooner the problem of its proper relationship to the highest forms of what is at present called technical education is faced in a realistic manner, the better for all concerned." In fact, "the best contribution that universities can make towards 'reconstruction research' is to start by reconstructing themselves in close collaboration with institutions of technical education" (pp. 22, 3). If they do, it is not hard to see their finish. If they adopt the criterion of social usefulness (in place of their own criterion of scholarship), they will very soon be technical institutions. The whole trend of Medley's proposals is in this direction; and it is the technicians who will constitute the "educated élite" whose leadership he prefers not to call "Fascism". Presumably this is because no one will dispute it. "It is in our conception of citizenship that we must find the foundation of our secular ethic and it is obvious that its main lesson must be the responsibility of every citizen for the community at large" (p. 24). And this conception is to be filled out by the activity of community centres. "Goals cannot be reached without the machinery to attain them. A belief that talk is enough, that making speeches will itself produce results is a characteristic of democracy that has done us immeasurable harm. Let us cut the cackle and come to the community centres" (p. 26). The characteristic of democracy that Medley here caricatures is *opposition*; and the reality behind his idyllic picture of social agreement is the *repression* of opposition.

What I have tried to bring out in this review is the anti-democratic character of "planning". Much further argument would be required to show the illiberality of the reforming attitude in general. But I hope I have shown that the A.C.E.R. might well devote some of its "research" to a consideration of liberality and utility as opposing trends in



the educational world. Meanwhile it pleases me to think that this pamphlet so far gives the game away that it will do the cause of "educational reconstruction" a great deal of harm.

JOHN ANDERSON.

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## NOTES AND NEWS.

COMMUNICATION FROM H. KAULLA, Ph.D. (MUNICH).

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ACCORDING to a recent newspaper report, Professor Kurt Huber of the University of Munich was beheaded about the end of May, 1943, on the grounds of his being the intellectual leader of a group of students some of whom had been imprisoned and some executed for an alleged conspiracy. When brought before the Gauleiter he is reported to have said that the German youth and the soul of the people were in danger.

It might perhaps be fitting that some facts concerning this man's life should be recorded in this Journal.

Born at Stuttgart approximately 47 years ago, Huber became a Privatdozent about 1922 and was appointed extraordinary professor of philosophy in 1926, his academic work to include also experimental and applied psychology. Huber was highly musical; and in the field of experimental psychology he was especially interested in the problems of the psychology of tone. He was considerably influenced by C. Stumpf of Berlin, who in turn took great personal interest in Huber's work. He shared Stumpf's interest in Brentano's point of view, both in respect of psychology and philosophy.

Huber held strong views on the problems of life and culture; these were in striking contrast to his marked physical frailness. The control of his limbs, especially his hands, was greatly impaired, as a result of infantile paralysis from which he had suffered in his youth. Thus the man whose outstanding musical ability led him to include in his lectures a course on the æsthetics of music was actually unable to play an instrument himself.

There is little doubt that Kurt Huber's name will live in the memory of the Munich University as one who sacrificed life itself by the guillotine for the ideals he held.

# AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

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THE Annual Congress of the Association will be held in Sydney University on Saturday, October 23. The programme is as follows:

## MORNING SESSION—

10 a.m.—Annual Meeting.

10.15 a.m.—“Logical Positivism”:

J. A. Passmore, M.A.

## AFTERNOON SESSION—

2.15 p.m.—“The Servile State”:

Professor John Anderson, M.A.

Both sessions will be held in the Philosophy Room. The cost of admission to each will be 1s.

J. PASSMORE,  
Hon. Secretary.

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THE reduced size of the Journal is due to Government regulation. Its extreme lateness is due to pressure on the Editor's time, which, as most readers will know, was considerably taken up with the defence of freedom of discussion against the attacks of certain *dévots* and legislators. The Editor still hopes that the three numbers of the present volume will have been issued by the end of the year or shortly thereafter.